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AIR-COOLED NEWS

PUBLICATION OF

THE H. H. FRANKLIN CLUB

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I note with great interest your program aimed to increase Franklin prestige. Perhaps the best message I can give you for your magazine is to quote from a letter just received from Mr. Carl T. Doman, of Detroit, a former Franklin engineer. He says:

"When I was younger, it appeared that possibly air-cooling would be an impractical approach to cooling. However, with the years I am convinced more than ever that direct air-cooling is the ultimate way by which a power plant should be cooled. With the return to V-8 overhead engines, air-cooling becomes a much simpler job. Furthermore, with the advanced production techniques, items which used to appear expensive to us in Syracuse, are no longer considered to be expensive."

With all good wishes, believe me

Most sincerely yours,

H. H. Franklin

(December 26, 1951)

AIR-COOLED NEWS

Publication of

THE H. H. FRANKLIN CLUB
Headquarters: 1405 East Kleindale Road, Tucson, Arizona

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EDITORIAL

THE CLUB, ITS SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The H. H. Franklin Club was formed November 1951, in Los Angeles by ten Franklin enthusiasts who own a total of thirty-nine Franklin cars ranging in age from a 1903 to a 1933 model. The initiative was taken by R. V. Keys of Whittier, California, and T. H. Hubbard of Tucson, Arizona. The plan is limited to the gathering of material of interest to Franklin fans and to making it available through this bulletin. We do not propose to formally organize a club in the sense of collecting dues, promoting meets, or assuming any obligations to publish future issues.

Membership is limited to those owning Franklin cars or some other air-cooled automobile such as a Frayer-Miller, a Czech Tatra, a Fox, Detroit Air-Cooled Twin Three, Victor Page, or an Adams-Farwell, to name just a few. Membership is automatic upon receipt of the applicant's name and address together with a description of his cars. Dues are voluntary, and may be paid in one of two ways: by the submission of articles for publication in future issues or by making a donation of from $1.00 to $5.00 to our Treasurer, Clifford W. Boram, 104 Oak Street, Maywood, Illinois. If sufficient funds are available, future issues will sport a printed page or two with pictures. Boram and Hubbard have paid the cost of this issue.

Generally, our purpose is to increase Franklin prestige, to make knowledge of the cars more available, to encourage their restoration, and to promote the old-time fraternal spirit among Franklin owners, people who always saluted each other on the road and who tolerated no deviation from their creed, which was air-cooling. Our success depends upon all of us and especially upon former associates of the Franklin Automobile Company who can tell the stories of the proposed 4 cylinder car in the early 1920's, of the introduction of the V-12s and Olympics in 1932, of the attempts to reorganize after 1934, the numbers and types of custom built Franklins, and so on. Although never built, plans for 1935 and 1936 models were probably well advanced and drawings of these would make excellent copy. We have a fascinating subject, and from all who are interested we need your story that we may, through a series of these bulletins, present the complete story of one of America's most interesting and outstanding automobiles.

HERBERT H. FRANKLIN

by George S. Boyer
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Among the executives of the American automobile industry, Herbert H. Franklin is distinctly individual. His greatest contribution was in proving to the industry the practicability of an air-cooled automobile engine, this fact being conceded by all fair-minds in the industry although all other manufacturers had adopted water-cooled engines. At the time of the liquidation of the H. H. Franklin Manufacturing Company, Mr. Franklin had been head of his automobile concern longer than any other automobile executive. His enthusiasm for the motor car is revealed by the fact that he was reputed to use an automobile far more extensively in his business than any other manufacturer.

Herbert H. Franklin was born on an up-state New York farm about 3 miles from the small town of Lisle. He entered the newspaper business at the age of 19 and worked his way up to editor of a paper in Coxsackie, New York. In 1892 he sold the paper and bought an undeveloped invention for making castings. The following year he moved to Syracuse, and by 1895 had established a shop to develop the "die-casting" invention.

In 1901 Franklin became interested in an air-cooled motor car designed by John Wilkinson, recently graduated from Cornell engineering school. Franklin succeeded in interesting several other individuals, W. C. Lipe and Alexander T. Brown, and work was begun on the first experimental Franklin car boasting a four-cylinder, valve-in-head, air-cooled, gasoline engine. A second experimental model was made before No. 3 was built and sold to S. G. Averell of New York. This was on June 23, 1902, and the price was $1,200. Note that this first Franklin model (13 sold in 1902) had its motor up front under the hood and had a steering wheel. This was the first production four-cylinder car made in America.

From 1902 to 1919 the company, under Franklin's guidance, grew slowly but progressively. In 1905 the first Franklin "6" appeared; in 1911 the Renault-type hood appeared; and late in 1913 the famous "six-thirty" was introduced. Throughout this period and even into the late twenties Franklin steadfastly stuck to his original principles for a motor car: scientific light weight in a quality car, air-cooling, and easy riding owing to full-elliptic springs and flexible wood frame. By 1930 the Franklin Company was beginning to feel the effects of the "big three", and, like many other fine independents, was forced into a higher and higher price bracket demanding ever larger and heavier cars. This, occurring during the depths of a depression, dealt Franklin a mortal blow which terminated in May 1934 with the cessation of production, liquidation of the company following within 2 years, but only after valiant efforts at revival had failed.

Mr. Franklin has lived in semi-retirement since the failure of his company. Although he was subjected to the painful experience of seeing fail the company which had for 32 years proved his principles, Mr. Franklin must certainly derive some satisfaction from the fact that he, almost single-handedly, was responsible in proving the practicability of the air-cooled automobile engine in America.

FRANKLIN AIR-COOLING
by T. H. Hubbard

Franklin enthusiasts have had a good laugh at Detroit lately over the latter's troubles resulting from efforts to cut down on radiator cores or to substitute different metals to save copper for defense. Not that we are unpatriotic, you understand, but we can not help smiling at a 10 or 20 per cent reduction in the size of radiators when we know that a 100% reduction would be much more satisfactory. We wonder when Detroit will finally take it all off and along with it such contrivances as water pumps, fan belts, hoses, gaskets, and thermostats, not to mention all the many accessories like anti-freeze, rust inhibitors, water-pump lubricators, radiator welding solutions, bug screens, and so on. Detroit, let's take it all off.

We favor air-cooling, of course; direct air-cooling to be exact, since all gas engines are always air-cooled. In the direct type, all the multiple attendant failures inherent in the system using water as a heat transfer agent are eliminated, along with considerable weight and close to 200 separate parts. With the Franklin, the turbine fan is the only moving part of the cooling system, and this is fixed permanently to the crankshaft. The Franklin owner can forget that he has a cooling system and does until some naive station attendant starts looking for a place to put the water.

Weather conditions are of no interest to the Franklin engine which was always easy to start, quick to warm up in freezing temperatures, and indifferent to extreme desert heat, as Death Valley Scotty often testified So dependable were they in their day that physicians used them extensively causing them to be known as "the doctors' car". Not too unusual was the case of a Mid West clinic that housed 17 doctors who drove 17 Franklin cars. Your author, a Southwesterner, can testify to the Franklin's indifference to extreme heat. In August 1933 he crossed Death Valley in a new Franklin Olympic, cruising at 75 miles an hour all the way, despite a temperature of over 120 degrees. The few water cooled jobs that did venture out in the midday heat were quite obviously sorry for not having waited until after sun down, as they had been advised to do. Modern cars will still boil under such conditions, although the concealment of the radiator cap under the hood has eliminated some of the embarrassment.

Now to say that everything about Franklin air-cooling was advantageous would be untrue. The Company did have its troubles as the result of the system. Undoubtedly the biggest of these was selling to the public the fact that it really worked. They tried everything. They challenged one and all to summer hill climbing contests, in either reverse gear which was their favorite way, or otherwise; they drove their cars non-stop for a thousand miles or more continuously in low gear; they staged economy demonstrations from one end of the country to the other, and, we believe Franklin still holds the world's official stock car economy record of 83.7 miles per gallon which was set by a 1902 model; they set a number of long distance speed records including several transcontinental runs, the first one being set in 1904 in just under 33 days from San Francisco to New York; and at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, they even had a colored boy riding about on a Franklin, sitting right on top of the engine. He carried a sign read-

ing "Ah ain't hot!" But with all of this, their best argument was that by 1929 Franklin could boast the highest percentage of repeat buyers in the industry. Few drivers ever returned to the nuisance and worry of water cooled engines after once having an air-cooled car.

Aside from this sales problem, Franklin was not a quiet engine, although it was of quality construction and was noted for precision balance. Because of the high operating temperatures and consequent larger expansion of parts, the overhead valve push rods caused some tappet noise. Required high tolerances also resulted in mild piston slap during the warm up period. Air passing over the cooling fins contributed some noise, and the cylinders lacked the insulating effect of being jacketed in water. However, developments of recent years make possible the elimination of the worst noise offenders. Hydraulic valve lifters take care of the tappet problem; the new art of bimetallic casting in which aluminum fins may be cast to steel cylinders, and steel bands may be cast in aluminum pistons for the insertion of rings, aids in eliminating the piston slap bogie; and the feasibility of reducing the volume of air formerly thought necessary is another help.

Frankly, your author feels that the idea of the Franklin engine being noisy is greatly exaggerated and he is particularly galled at apologizing for the noise of "air passing over fins". This criticism has been made and is recorded here in an effort to be fair, but it is a noise which is not audible to your author's ears. Perhaps that is because his ears are too accustomed to the anguished complaints of the water pump and fan belt on his own 1951 Detroit Water-Logged "44". A Franklin with noises like this car was never made.

History dealt a cruel blow to the air-cooled engine when the depths of the country's worst depression coincided with Franklin's introduction in 1932 of two of the most highly refined automobile engines known. These supercharged 6 and 12 cylinder engines were the product of over 33 years of research. They were Franklin's greatest achievement after a long list of automotive firsts, including the introduction of America's first 4 cylinder engine in 1902, float feed carburetor in 1902, the first 6 cylinder engine in 1905, Hotchkiss drive - 1906, automatic spark advance in 1907, pressure recirculating oiling systems in 1912, the first V-type windshield for stock cars in 1916, the introduction of the 2-door sedan body style in 1916, and the pioneering of aluminum pistons, duralumin connecting rods, and case hardened crank shafts.

Even two years prior to the introduction of these engines the Technical Editor of Motor magazine suggested that the merits of the Franklin engine had become so pronounced that the rest of the industry might be compelled to give them attention. He considered that a new era for air-cooling was in prospect. But he probably did not anticipate the severity of the depression, however, which rapidly destroyed the firm's sales and dealer organization so that in the last three years, 1932, 1933, and 1934, a total of only 3,276 cars were built, while in the year 1929 alone, the last year of general prosperity, production had reached a record high of 14,432 units. Hence, while the Franklin Co. failed financially, their cars left the market on a note of engineering triumph. A study of these last engines, especially when viewed in light of Franklin's progressive 32 year improvement, suggests inescapably that had the company survived, it is likely that by now they would have forced a general conversion to air-cooling.

Recently, Mr. Franklin, who is now 86 years old, received a letter from his former Chief Research Engineer, Carl T. Doman, saying: "With the years, I am more convinced than ever that direct air-cooling is the ultimate way by which a power plant should be cooled. With the return to V-8 overhead engines, air-cooling becomes a much simpler job. Furthermore, with the advanced production techniques, items which used to appear expensive to us in Syracuse, are no longer considered to be expensive."

There are growing signs that air-cooling still has real prospects, particularly if automotive enthusiasts become aware of its advantages. In Czechoslovakia, behind the Iron Curtain, there is made the highly advanced, rear-engined Tatra automobile which is a large sedan powered by a V-8, air cooled power plant capable of pushing it along at speeds of up to 110 miles an hour. A smaller edition, the 4 cylinder air-cooled Tatraplan, is also made there. In Germany it is significant that Deutz, the oldest conbustion engine works in the world, recently introduced a line of air-cooled diesel engines ranging from 15 to 175 horse power.

In America, Continental Motors Corp. is developing a complete line of 4, 6, 8, and 12 cylinder air-cooled engines ranging from 125 horse power to 1040 horse power. Perhaps one of our independent auto manufacturers will yet discover in air-cooling a chance to gain a major advantage over their competition. But the job of interesting engineers who have worked only with water cooling is difficult, particularly since air-cooling is something of a mystery to most of them. The adoption of the system would require extensive research followed by considerable sales promotion. It also would require a knowledge of its merits and, therefore, a loud demand for it from those of us who have fine automobiles in the blood and who want the very best.

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FOR SALE: 1934 Franklin Airman Series 19 close-coupled, trunk-back sedan--the last and probably the most beautiful Franklin. With only a handful ever built, this is really a rare find --- truly a choice collector's item for the classic era. It is distinguished by a sharply pointed, radically inclined Vee-grill and full skirted fenders. The car is weathered, but has only 40,000 original miles and is in excellent condition for restoration. This car is being offered at practically a parts-car price by Frank W. Cross, 15 Crescent Street, Rochelle Park, N. J. Your editor believes that someone looking for a beautiful car as well as an excellent collector's investment in a classic period Franklin could do no better than with this one. Write Mr. Cross for full details.

FRANKLIN HOT ROD AIMS AT 300 MILE AN HOUR MARK

A hot rod aimed at the 300 mph mark is being built in Los Angeles and will use a Franklin engine, according to an article appearing in the June, 1952 issue of Hot Rod magazine. Described as one of the weirdest of the new, revolutionary hot rods, the car is being developed by Chet Herbert and Ed Johnson, who have contracted the services of Schapel Engineering Co. of Inglewood, California. According to Hot Rod, "the tubing chasis will be torsion bar suspended. Size and weight of the car will be kept at a minimum, a factor which led to the selection of a 330 cu. in. six cylinder, opposed, all aluminum Franklin engine".

With such ultra high speed machines, every bit of energy is conserved for the driving wheels and the cars are streamlined to the nth degree to cut air friction to a minimum. Hence, designers generally dispense with radiators in favor of 55 gallon drums of water which provide adequate cooling capacity on the short runs for which the cars are designed. For the same reason, the Franklin engine used will be converted to water cooling. (In other words, if any water-cooled-heretics happen to read this, you have nothing to crow about here!)

Hot Rod goes on to say that the Franklin engine seems ideally suited for much experimental souping up and it expects that the Herbert-Johnson car will be a leading contender for the distinction of being the first hot rod to reach 300 miles an hour.

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LITERATURE WANTED

To make a central source of information available to club members, your editor is building a library of Franklin catalogs, manuals, and advertisements for all years. So far the collection includes catalogs for: 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1918, 1930 (stock), 1930 (custom), 1932 (Airman and V-12), and 1933 (Olympic); Manuals for Series 11, 13, 15, 16, and 18; over 100 advertisements covering practically all years. If you have any duplicate items to offer, please write T. H. Hubbard, 1405 E. Kleindale Rd., Tucson, Arizona.

WANTED: Literature on Series Nine (1916 - 1922). Clifford Boram, 104 Oak Street, Maywood, Illinois.

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PARTS!

If you are in need of parts, probably the best supply is held by the Franklin Automobile Service Co., Auburn, Indiana. In reply to a recent letter, they said "we still stock a large supply of mechanical parts for the various Franklin models". Since they no longer issue a parts catalog, they ask the customer to furnish them with a list of probable requirements on which they will quote current prices.

AN OUTLINE OF FRANKLIN HISTORY
by T. H. Hubbard

The H. H. Franklin Manufacturing Co. had its inception July 4th, 1893, when Herbert H. Franklin began the manufacture of castings in a small room in Syracuse, New York. The process used, which Mr. Franklin termed "Die-Casting", was a wide departure from any previously employed method and there was thus produced for the first time irregularly shaped parts which required no machining before assembling, and which could be turned out both accurately and in volume.

In 1901, John Wilkinson was employed by Mr. Franklin to develop an automobile based on the one Mr. Wilkinson had designed and built in 1898 -- a car which had a 4 cylinder, air-cooled, valve-in-head engine. Two experimental cars were made before the third car, which is considered to be the first Franklin, was built and sold June 23, 1902, to S. G. Averell of New York City. Its 4 cylinders, $3\frac{1}{4}$ x $3\frac{1}{4}$, developed 7 horse power at 1000 rpm, and at the normal engine speed of 600 rpm. the car traveled at 12 miles per hour. The engine had jump spark ignition, with Apple dynamo and storage battery, splash lubrication, and an enclosed planetary transmission with 2 speeds forward and one in reverse. Low speed was geared 12 to 1, and high was 4 to 1. The car employed chain drive, the engine was transverse mounted and weighed 230 pounds. The entire carriage weighed 900 pounds and the price was $1200.

This car has had an interesting history. In 1929 it was repurchased by Franklin and brought back to Syracuse where it was restored and entered in several antique derbies. The car was driven in the Sesquicentennial Race in 1925 and came out victorious. In 1937 the car was purchased by the Smithsonian Institute where it resides today. According to the 1903 catalog, this car was "light because of its simplicity, easy to take care of for the same, durable for the same reason, and because it is correctly designed and made. Flexible of control because of its perfect carburetor, throttle, and spark advancer, and good in all weather because there is no water to freeze and burst the pipes. The Franklin is the motor car of the future."

The above principles were followed throughout the 32 years of Franklin production. Generally, they all supported the main theme, "Scientific Light Weight". Air-cooling of itself eliminates considerable weight; the wood frame did likewise, and also contributed to flexibility and, as with the wooden handle on a hammer, it absorbed road shocks; the tubular front axle reduced weight without sacrifice of strength. Great emphasis was placed upon the reduction of unsprung weight -- that weight below the springs. The front axle was approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ lighter than equivalent units, while the rear axle was 1/3 lighter. The absence of torque tubes and radius rods also reduced weight and added to flexibility. Both of these principles of light weight and flexibility were again advanced by the elimination of heavy cross members in the frame.

Aluminum was used for all bodies (until 1929), in crankcase, transmission, and rear end housings, pistons, rods, and in many other parts so that it is not surprising that at one time the Franklin Automobile Company was the largest user of aluminum in the world.

The full elliptic springs, which except for Series 17 and 18 (the V-12 & Olympic) were used on all Franklins thru Series 19 of 1934, allowed a remarkable degree of flexibility for both driving and braking actions. This combined with the shock absorbing qualities of the laminated ash frame plus a minimum of unsprung weight contributed to riding and road holding qualities which were conceded to be far above average and which were one of Franklin's most outstanding features.

In knowing the Franklin car we must understand the relationship to each other of these various, unusual ideas. The air-cooling system, the structural flexibility made practical by the absence of water lines, the strict mini-

mizing of unsprung weight, the extensive use of aluminum, the full elliptic springs, the wooden frame -- all were features that departed radically from general automotive design. But when viewed as a whole, they represent a very different concept of automotive design, and one which is consistant and logical for Franklin's aim of combining quality, comfort, and economy in a family type automobile. They were as functional to one objective as an army Jeep is to another. And when the Franklin owner fully grasps the thinking that went into his car he knows then that he has one of the most highly refined, well engineered automobiles ever made.

By the year 1906 the Franklin Company employed 1200 men and stood 3rd in sales among the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers. The firm grew slowly but steadily over the years, reaching a peak in 1929. Then from 1930 thru 1934, Franklin struggled during four years of the worst depression this country had ever known. Where the firm had made a profit of over 2 million dollars in 1929, it lost heavily each year thereafter, reaching a total deficit of about 11 million dollars for the last five years of production. In April of 1934 Mr. Franklin was forced into bankruptcy. A reliable person who was associated with Mr. Franklin and knew the financial end of the business claims that had Franklin been able to hang on only 2 or 3 months longer, he would have received the same Reconstruction Finance Corporation (R.F.C.) loans that were subsequently to save the other independents of the automobile industry from the same fate.

The chain drive Runabout type with the transverse engine was replaced in 1907 by a shaft driven car similar to the larger models introduced in 1904 and having the same barrel hood. With the transverse engine types, cooling had been dependent upon the forward motion of the car, but the conversion to the barrel hood, starting in 1904, was accompanied by the adoption of a chain driven fan. In 1908 this was changed to a gear driven fan and supplemented by using a flywheel with fan blades as spokes. Of interest is the graduation of the horizontal fins on these engines, the cylinder nearest the front fan having the least number of fins.

In 1910, and still under the barrel hood, an entirely new engine appeared which had vertical cooling flanges completely encased in a jacket except at the top and bottom. The engine compartment was divided by a horizontal panel so that air entering through the front grill could escape only by passing over the cooling fins. Air was sucked thru by a large turbine type flywheel. This system proved very successful and was used until 1922, with most engines of this type appearing under the "Renault" or "shovel-nose" hood first introduced in 1911.

Late in 1922 the pressure cooling system was adopted. In this method the flywheel ceased to be a fan and instead a large sirocco fan was fixed to the forward end of the crankshaft. Air from the fan was conducted in a duct over the top of the engine where it was forced down and out over vertical cooling fins. The system proved more positive and produced a substantial increase in power.

This "top-blown" engine was superseded in 1930 by the side-blast or air plane engine. Here the sirocco blower is retained at the front, but the air is conducted to the left isde where it is forced across horizontal

fins. This design permitted larger diameter combustion chambers and, therefore, larger valves, and resulted in improved breathing. It also reduced the horse power required for the blower and permitted a higher compression ratio. The result was greater economy and a considerable increase in power. In 1932 a supercharger was added to this engine by conducting air from the main cooling duct to the carburetor. Also this year the V-12 engine was introduced. With this engine the air is delivered back through the Vee where, like the six, it flows transversely past the cylinders to the open air.

Until 1911, cars were designated by year; those made after September 1, 1911, by series numbers, beginning at that date with Series One. Series 2 came out in the middle of 1912; Series 3 and 4 were built in 1913. Series 5, in the little six only, was introduced in January of 1914, and Series 6, in July. Series 7 and 8, introduced in 1915, were built until July 1916 when Series 9 came out. This Series 9 marks the change from the "Renault" hood to the more streamlined "shovel-nose" type bonnet. Pressure cooling appeared with Series 10 in September, 1922. The Series 11 embodying the DeCausse designed false radiator was introduced in 1925 and was followed by the Airman Series 12 in the fall of 1927. The three sizes of 1929 cars were called Series 13, and the air plane engine arrived in 1930 with Series 14. Thereafter, the six cylinder models were Series 15 in 1931, Series 16 in 1932 (for the big six), Series 18 for the Olympic, and finally the Airman Series 19 of 1934. The V-12, built from 1932 to 1934, was Series 17.

Following bankruptcy in 1934, several serious efforts were made to put the Franklin car back on the market, but none of the several interested groups were successful. Probably the most publicized plans were those of the Lewis-American Airways, Inc. of Syracuse and Rochester, New York. This firm employed the services of Carl Doman and Edward Marks, formerly top Franklin engineers, to design a full sized, but very light weight, three-wheeled, front drive automobile to be known as the Airmobile. Plans for this car, which employed an air-cooled, 4 cylinder, horizontally opposed engine, were well advanced and at least one was built and thoroughly road tested. The car was displayed in New York City, orders were accepted for it, and it was expected to be in production in time for the 1938 models. At this writing, reasons for the failure of this plan are not known. Presumably the economic recession of 1937, a major one, stopped this last attempt to revive what would have been essentially the Franklin automobile. In a future issue we hope to present the full story of the Airmobile which, in the full Franklin tradition, was a radical car, a rugged individualist among the common herd.

FIRST ANNUAL MEET HELD IN LOS ANGELES

Mr. Ralph Hamlin entertained the first annual meeting of The H. H. Franklin Club on the grounds of his beautiful estate in West Los Angeles last August 31st. Through a mixup, many Franklin owners in the Los Angeles area were not notified, and the selection of Labor Day weekend was unfortunate. Labor Day, Los Angeles, and antique automobiles are an unhappy combination. Never-the-less, the meeting did produce a total of ten Franklins, and those who came had a very enjoyable time.

Mr. Hamlin was the Los Angeles distributor for Franklin over several de-

cades, knows Mr. Franklin well, and is an ardent enthusiast. In his trophy room he has on display 3 beautiful antique Franklins -- a 1902 model believed to be the second oldest in existence; the original 1904 car which set a transcontinental record of under 33 days from San Francisco to New York; and a 1908 Model "G" runabout.

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MY LAST RACE

by Ralph Hamlin

My wife never did like me to race but it wasn't until 1912 that she finally extracted a promise from me to quit. I had been racing for a good many years. Four times I entered the Phoenix Road Race without winning it. We could both remember the time, the expense -- and the worry. There was the first Phoenix race when I spent the better part of a day and some of the night running over the desert looking for the Ehrenberg Ferry crossing of the Colorado. There was the accident of the 1909 trial run that ruined the air-cooling system on my car and caused me to spend one night on the desert and three days in Glamis waiting for transportation home. My wife lived through these, and countless other experiences year after year. In retrospect, I can appreciate her reasons for extracting that promise from me. The 1912 race was pretty important to us both.

I laid my plans with care, and after an early test run set a schedule that would bring me into Phoenix in 18 hours and 10 minutes. My racing time later proved to be just 12 minutes behind the mark. As in the four previous races, my car was a Franklin. It seemed to me that its air-cooled motor, large tires and light weight should be ideally suited to the heat and sandy trails of the desert. Andrew Smith, an old friend, rode with me as mechanic. When we lined up that Saturday evening of October 26 for the 11 P.M. start, we had 11 formidable opponents. Among them were Bill Bramlette driving a Cadillac, Louis Nikrent driving a Buick and Charles Soules in another Cadillac. All three had been in previous races, Nikrent having won the 1909 contest in just over 19 hours.

I was counting on a long stretch of sand between Los Angeles and Yuma on which to overtake the bigger, heavier cars that could outdistance me on the sections of good roads. I planned to take few chances, running as close to schedule as possible. It was a winning schedule, I thought, unless a major mishap occurred.

Eddie Maier, the starter, slapped the first driver on the back at exactly 11:05 and the rest of us started off at five-minute intervals. Eight cars preceded me through the city and out onto the good roads of Los Angeles County. The crowds thinned as we moved into open country and down through the San Gorgonio Pass. Smith was busy keeping the searchlight on every twist and turn in the road as our Franklin averaged better than 65 miles per hour passing through Pomona. Just out of Ontario we came upon the only bad accident of the trip. Smith yelled that the twisted mass of broken steel was Louis Nikrent's Buick. We barely missed running into it, a fate that we later found had put Charley Bigelow and his Mercedes out of the race. We

heard Nikrent was unhurt so we kept on and soon overtook one of the six cars that remained ahead of us.

A few miles out of Banning we passed the 32 horsepower Hupmobile driven by Leonard Jones, and then caught the first Cadillac to start the race. Near White Water we sighted Bramlette and finally passed him just before entering Palm Springs. Only two cars were ahead of us now: the Cadillac driven by Soules and Al Faulkner's Simplex. I knew that both of these men would take advantage of every inch of road.

At Indio we threw our first and only tire of the race. Every one of the eight minutes that it took to change it seemed like an hour. Coming into Coachella the roads grew better and now only a few moments separated us from the leaders. We went through Mecca and started out on the sands of the Colorado Desert when we suddenly saw Faulkner's Simplex some 12 miles ahead of us kicking up a trail of dust and sand. It would take some driving to pass that car!

As we passed through Brawley I decided that we must catch him in the dreaded Mammoth Wash, a wasteland of sand. I remembered it well, for it was here that I broke a rear axle during the 1909 race. This time we had better luck.

A few teams of horses had been placed along the way to pull out unfortunates who got stuck in the sand, but we had no use for them. Our large tires and the light car lived up to my expectations. A few miles from the head of the wash we came upon the Simplex, helplessly stalled in the sand. Now we were second in the race and leading all others in running time. The Arizona hills came into view and then we saw the Colorado River. We got the car onto a crude raft and some Indians pulled us across the river by a cable. So ended the first lap. Our cars were in control at Yuma from noon Sunday until daybreak Monday. But there was little rest for us. Telegrams poured into town. Ahead of us were raging streams and washed out roads. The Hassayampa River was impassable. Ferry service was discontinued. The bridge was out. We didn't sleep much that night!

The next morning we were on our way. It was 202 miles to Phoenix and we were trying to hold the lead we had established on Saturday. We crossed the Gila River, went through Dome, Middle Wells, Arlington and Buckeye. For an anxious 10 minutes we lost our way. Someone had reversed the signs at the Gila River and we took the wrong turn. But back on the road, we were still in the lead as we approached the swollen waters of the Hassayampa. Fortunately, we located a spot where the water was no more than two feet deep and crossed safely. At the Agua Fria River we had the same problem, but by wrapping the magneto in a rubber cover we managed to keep from stalling.

Now we were more than 20 miles in the lead. Soules was the only driver within reach and the prize was practically ours. We were two happy men when we saw Phoenix. The race was won. Our time, 18 hours and 22 minutes, was the fastest time then recorded for this run.

When the shouts and cheers were over I had time to think. I had at last won the Phoenix Race. It was my last race. I had made a promise and there was someone at home waiting to hear the news.

Note: *Copyright 1950 Automobile Club of Southern California, 2601 South Figueroa St., Los Angeles 54, California. Send them 30¢ for December, 1950, issue of Westways for original of this article with 5 excellent pictures. At least a dozen other Franklins are pictured in this issue also.

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Personalized Club Stationery is available featuring your name, address, and the Franklin Club emblem in brown ink. Remainder of page bears a "watermark" showing all Franklin models. (Same plates as used on front page). Price is $27.50 for 1000 letterheads in two colors; and $18.00 for 1000 (or $12.50 for 500) legal size envelopes. Write T. H. Hubbard, 1405 E. Kleindale Rd., Tucson, Arizona for details.

ONLY 216 OF THE V-12s EVER BUILT - WHERE ARE THEY NOW?